Rare Birds in Our City Parks

By J. B. Carrington

ONE of the Bronx Botanical Garden men told me the other day of the excitement caused among a flock of crows by the appearance of a big navy dirigible that flew over the park. Black James Crow is a bold and a mighty wise bird and he is afraid of nothing feathered that flies. I've seen a flock drive a hawk for miles, calling him names, darting at his back, bluffing him with dire threats of vengeance. But the dirigible was a new one and the crows kept at a very respectful distance. The size of the monster with its terrible whirring wings was something new and menacing in the crow world. He called the clan, however, and they flew after it cawing, making the woods ring with the alarm signal.

I have seen the pigeons flying in terror from an aeroplane over the city and no doubt many of the migrating birds on their journey north will be frightened out of their way by these new birds that make such a terrible buzzing noise and fly so swiftly. For the crows, I'm willing to bet their observers will sight the humans in the machine and soon become as indifferent as they do to the farmers' scarecrows.

Thousands of birds are on their way from the South and every day now we are apt to see an old friend returned or make a new acquaintance among birds heretofore unobserved.

Many people think they must go to the country to see birds; but, as a matter of fact, you will see a greater variety in our city parks than you will in the country. On their migrations they fly over our cities and, looking down on the open spaces of Central Park, or even on city squares, they are apt to stop for a rest and food. Many of our regular summer residents build homes in Central Park, and Bronx Park is peopled in spring and summer with hundreds of feathered folk who find abundant bugs and seeds there to supply their table.

Rarities in a Backyard

Central and Bronx parks are rich hunting grounds for every bird lover. You expect to see birds there and you are never disappointed. How many of my readers, however, would expect to see some of the rare wood warblers and shyest of woodland birds in our city squares or a city backyard? For many springs I have carried my glass in my pocket as I have walked uptown, always with an eye out for flitting wings in Washington, Madison and Union squares, and I have been repaid a hundredfold each year seeing the unexpected bird—unexpected I mean, and unobserved by the thousands who walk through these squares morning and evening or sit on the benches in the sunshine at the lunch hour.

The surprising thing to the bird lover is the apparent indifference of the shyest birds to the passing throng and the businesslike way they hunt among the trees and parade the lawns for insects, and that dainty morsel loved by the robins especially, the angleworm. In Union Square I have seen in May the chestnut and black towhee, a shy bird of the underbrush, the long-tailed brown thrasher, the white-throated sparrow, the ovenbird, the hermit thrush with his bright reddish tail, the veery thrush, catbird. Madison Square, with its wider lawn, has a larger guest record. Here, from year to year, I have found towhees, brown thrashers, ovenbirds—you can easily know them by their walking—white-throated sparrows, catbirds, veeries, the black-throated green warbler, scarlet tanagers and wrens. The tanagers have been seen in City Hall Park. In Madison Square one year ago I counted one morning thirteen ovenbirds, four towhees, three brown thrashers, three scarlet tanagers, a catbird, a veery and purple grackles.

I have come to expect seeing some of these birds in our city squares, but in the backyards I look out on, with their scraggly old ailanthus trees, I have seen the birds that have offered me the joy of the unexpected, the mood of the woodland, the memory of early mornings and peaceful evenings in the quiet country. The rattle of the streetcars and the roar of the elevated are of my dawn music, and I only glimpse a small bit of sky above the surrounding roofs and the round towers of the water tanks. It was in the dawn one May morning that walking, still on the borderland of sleep, I heard the thrush note, the note of the ethereal, note of sweet bells in the distance, of far-away flutings, of liquid sounds of singing water. It sounded far away, and I thought of the woods, of the dawn light over the hills, of the stir of the morning winds in the forest. With my glass I saw the musician, an olive-backed thrush, on the ailanthus tree. He sat there forgetting, as he made me forget, the sordid city yards, lifting up his sweet voice in praise of the new day. It was his matin song, he was my celestial choir leader. He stayed for two days, singing again the second morning. The ailanthus has had other guests, but none that brought just the same message. Among others there have been a Canadian warbler with his necklace of dark pendants on his breast, a yellow-bellied flycatcher, a redstart, a chebec or flycatcher, an ovenbird who called for teacher, a magnolia warbler with his yellow-striped body and a white wing patch; a scarlet tanager, red-eyed vireo, a Maryland yellow-throat, the tiny yellow chap with the black burglar's mask across his forehead, singing witchery! witchery! witchery!

The Real Harbinger

Of them all, in most minds, the bluebird is the real announcer of spring. How many country people watch for him; how many hearts are made glad by his color—heaven above!—with a touch of the good brown earth on his breast! Here is Thoreau's announcement of his return:

"The bluebird, which some woodchopper or inspired walker is said to have seen in that sunny interval between the snowstorms, is like a fleck of clear blue sky seen near the end of a storm, reminding us of an ethereal region and a heaven which we had forgotten. Princes and magistrates are often styled serene, but what is their turbid serenity to the ethereal serenity which the bluebird embodies? His most serene Birdship! His soft, melting warble melts on the car as snow is melting in the valleys around. The bluebird comes, and with his warble drills the ice and sets free the rivers and frozen ground. This little rill of melody flows a short way down the concave of the sky."

On many days this winter I have seen in Bronx Park flocks of chickadees, "lisping and twittering cheerfully to one another with a reference to me, I think. One a little further off utters the phœbe note. 'Dear, friendly little birds,' says Thoreau. And the cawing of the crows there had a sort of human challenge and a call to spring. Early in March I saw in Bronx Park for the first time a flock of pine siskins feeding on the top of a big black birch tree. One of the gardeners there asked me if I had seen or heard the grackles, and spoke of the beauty of the forms of the bare winter trees. He said he knew them as far as he could see them, each by its own individual way of branching and color.

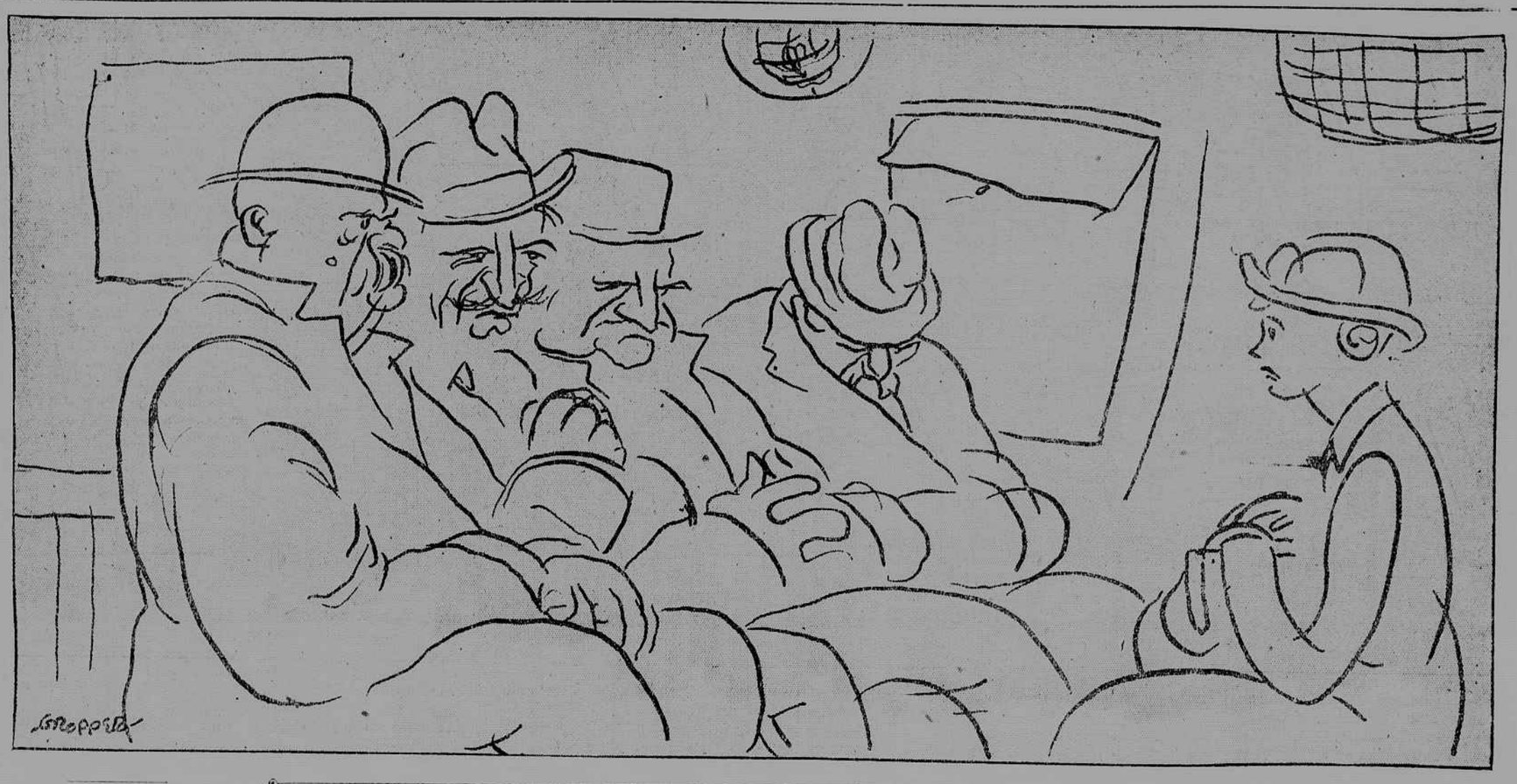
Keep your eyes open for the returning birds. The English sparrows are with us always. With them some morning on the lawn in Madison Square you make a discovery—see a song sparrow, a white-throated sparrow, an ovenbird walking along, a rare warbler of striking color, or one of the thrushes with his brown back and mottled breast. If you do not know them by name you can easily look them up in some popular bird "Who's Who," if you will only make a note of some particular markings and color.

Survival of The Fittest

A new bird is like a glimpse of the promised land to the mariner—you feel that you are in a new world, a part of one that has been closed because you have thought it existed only in the far-away places. There's a new world right here at your door, along the old paths that lead you to your daily work in an office, in the centre of the wilderness of tall buildings that cut off our visions of the sky and make us forget that there are clear horizons unobstructed by the thought of barter and the eternal struggle of our narrow city ways. We get a glimpse of nature and better realize that we are but a part of the universal life. The struggle for existence, the relentless law of life is everywhere the same. The poets talk of the carefree life of the birds, but in reality their existence is beset with danger from their birth to the end. Thousands perish in the spring and fall migrations and thousands die from exposure, and many are preyed upon by their own kind. I recently saw a hawk kill and tear a pigeon to pieces on a church spire at Forty-eighth Street and Fifth Avenue! Modern nature writers in making us think of the birds and animals in human terms, to know them as they really live, have benefited both the birds and humans. One of the most delightful chapters Colonel Roosevelt ever wrote was the account of the birds and little animals about his home at Oyster Bay.

The Drunken Passenger

A Story



By Margaret Clark Williams

I KNEW all the time that I ought not to go. It was an entire evening's trip, and women do not travel alone at night in France. But the wire said that Tante Clarice was seriously ill, and there was no train until 3 the following afternoon, unless I took the 8:43. And surely a woman of thirty past, level-headed and experienced, might launch in safety on adventures denied to young girls.

The drive to town was dreary, over bad roads, with Henri, who disapproved bitterly of my going. He set me down on the platform, dumped out my bag and departed into the night with a muttered farewell. The station was small and dirty, illy lighted by a lamp with a smoke-begrimed chimney. I was the only person waiting for the train, and the old stationmaster eyed me disapprovingly.

The night was dark and clouded, with a fitful wind. Obviously, it intended to storm later in the evening.

The train rumbled around the curve, red-eyed in the darkness, and the stationmaster went out to flag it. I held myself in readiness to mount quickly, and had no time to select a carriage. The one into which I stumbled was occupied by one man.

The compartment was close, smelling of kerosene, and unpleasantly dim, with a flickering oil light overhead. I saw, to my discomfiture, that it was not a corridor train, and realized that I was shut in with my companion until the next station should be reached. I looked across at him anxiously, and was in no way reassured. He was small and swarthy, with a pointed face which did not in the least inspire confidence. I answered his greeting as coldly as I dared.

A feeling of uneasiness seized me. My trip suddenly appeared an outrageous folly.

It occurred to me that I would better seem to be occupied, and I unfolded the evening paper with which Henri had gloomily provided me. It was a single sheet, local affair, chronicling the violent happenings in the lives of the people of Arde and the surrounding countryside. To-night it was full of the mysterious disappearance of the Mayor of Arde and alarmed conjectures as to the reason. I found the paper depressing and abandoned the plan of reading it.

I felt my fellow passenger study me with a curiosity that I furiously resented, but I did not dare betray my annoyance. I tried to look out of the window, but dense blackness pressed against the pane, and I gave it up as a useless pose.

I decided to get out at the next stop. I knew it to be a hamlet, but doubtless there would be some sort of auberge, kept by honest folk. But before we had reached the place the storm broke, and, without warning, the rain burst on us in thunderous torrents, slithering in sheets across the windowglass. The man grinned at me, and remarked that the weather had spoiled. I took a stern grip on myself, assuring myself that my sense of vague uneasiness was due to the night, and that it was far wiser to continue on my way than to descend at an unknown village, late at night, in a flood of rain.

I thought that we would not stop at the village unless signalled, but evidently the train was flagged, for we slowed down. I could see nothing from the window, not even the light of a station. Suddenly the door at the other side of the compartment opened and four men entered. The fourth among them was absolutely drunk, so that his three comrades hauled and pushed him into the compartment, propping him heavily in a corner, his hat low over his face. I looked at the others and started in alarm. Two were heavy and huge and brutal, and the third had a sharpened rat's face; the expressions of all three were limned with a deep and virulent malignancy that struck cold terror to my heart. They showed no signs of drink, but were alert and quick of movement.

It came over me that the behavior of my fellow passenger was peculiar. At the entrance of the quartet he had scarcely accorded them a glance, but had reached for my paper and was now perusing it diligently. He did not even seem aware that others had entered. For some unaccountable reason this frightened me more than ever. I glanced at the men, and the rat-faced one met my eyes with a look of such concentrated evil that my heart missed a beat.

Presently the man across from me laid aside his paper, rose and seated himself beside me, saying loudly, "It rains still, ma chère." Before I had time to move he had adjusted my wrap, leaning close and whispering tensely: "Do not look at those men!"

I did not speak, for my voice was lost in my throat. It seemed the lesser danger to do as he ordered. We sat closely together at our end of the compartment, and I pressed my face against the window, trying to draw breath with reasonable regularity. I did not look again at the men, but I was acutely conscious of their boring eyes. I knew that in their patois, which I could not understand, they were saying vile things.

Some mysterious and hideous danger threatened us. The atmosphere of the compartment was terrible with a hideous evil. It was as real, as dreadful a thing, as the terror of a crowd in panic, or the mad horror of a mob after blood.

The lamp above us dimmed, throwing weird shadows which shifted about the walls with the swaying of the car. Oil dripped on the floor, spreading dull, unpleasant spots. Across the window beat the rain; there was an occasional sharp flash, with an answering crash of thunder. My throat and mouth were dry, my hands quivered, and I had difficulty in focussing my eyes.

The man beside me pressed closer, asking clearly: "Fatiguée, ma chère?" I could only shake my head in reply.

The car gave a sudden terrific lurch, almost throwing me from the seat and hurling the drunken man over on the man next him. With a stream of violent language, the man pushed him back into his corner, passionate loathing on his face. I shuddered in my own corner. The utter indifference of my fellow passenger to the others in the compartment was strangely alarming in itself, and terrified me more than ever.

The train slowed down and stopped. Quite without warning and with startling suddenness, the man beside me threw open the compartment door and hurled my suitcase out into the darkness and the rain. Before I had time to exclaim in angry protest he seized me with amazing strength and half pushed, half threw me out the open door, so that I nearly fell on the ground. He followed with a leap, slamming the door, and I heard a howl from within, like that of animals.

At that instant the train started; the man snatched my bag and pulled me along at a run. Overwhelmed with pure panic, my feet found wings.

The train gathered speed, and the last carriage passed us with a rush of wind. We were nearly at the little station when the man stopped running. A brilliant flash of lightning revealed his face, ashen and drawn. "That was the Mayor of Arde," he explained.

I knew at once of which man he spoke. "They had made him prettily drunk," I said.

He did not answer. We were on the platform of the small station and in the circle of yellow light cast by the swaying lantern. He opened the door of the waiting room and motioned me to enter.

We stepped inside and he set my suitcase down on a bench. From the office we heard the clicking of the telegraph. The man started toward it, then turned to me and stared at me fixedly.

"The man was dead," he said, and went on into the office.

Harvard Comes to Town

By P. M. Hollister

SOLDIER shows a-plenty have stormed the Kremhilde line of a New York audience since we entered the war; one such has appeared with some success since we finished the war; all have furnished a refreshing snap and vigor and no little professional talent, but it has remained for the Hasty Pudding Club, of Harvard, to offer a purely amateur musical comedy of which the entire cast has seen service.

"Crowns and Clowns" is its name. The play will be given at a matinee and evening performance at the Hotel Astor on April 19. Of the principals, five were junior lieutenants in the navy, three lieutenants of artillery, two members of the marines, one an army aviator, one an infantry lieutenant; one of the chorus girls has brought down "his" German 'plane, and another has been a prisoner in five different German camps. And so, with the resumption of theatricals which the war interrupted in 1917 just when the spring "show" was ready for its overture, the Pudding has added one more bright list of names to those illustrious others which have figured in the antics of the club for more than 120 years.

A Century Of Tradition

The Hasty Pudding Club came into being on the night of September 8, 1795, in the room of Nymphas Hatch, then a junior in Harvard College, when Master Hatch and several convivial spirits met over a bowl of cornmeal porridge, or hasty pudding. So far as the records of the club reveal, it existed for the common and natural purposes of supplying young bellies with pleasant nourishment and young minds with gay exercise. Mock debates gave way to mock trials, and finally, in 1845, the club produced a play, "Bombastes Furioso." It was a riot—and it threatened to start one, for the days of austere President Everett countenanced neither playacting nor frivolity. But the undergraduates wanted plays. So the next year a youth named Child arranged for dramatic presentation a number of dialogues from a best seller of the moment called "Martin Chuzzlewit"—the same Child who was known to later generations as Professor Child, and who taught a splendid Shakespeare.

So plays became the thing—not one, but several each year. The class of '52 devised an utterly unpronounceable skit called "Chrononhotonthologos," in which our late Ambassador to England, Joseph Hodges Choate, '52, played the rôle of Doctor and of which he wrote the epilogue. A prologue in verse presently became the regular custom, and Phillips Brooks and Charles Francis Adams are both chronicled as having prepared and spoken excellent parts. Phillips Brooks was no less charming an actor than a public character, if we may judge from the frequent appearance of his name in the playbills of his generation; he was Lawyer Fennell in "Used Up," Duncan in a burlesque of "Macbeth" and Ginger in "The Irish Lion."

Pudding Actors on The American Stage

The early plays were frequently repeated, as there was no great amount of available material. But in 1855 there was music for "Tom Thumb," and this opened new avenues of entertainment. The club occasionally wandered into the realms of opera, and in 1870 gave "a capital burlesque of 'Don Giovanni,'" by Henry Cabot Lodge, who is now trying to make a capital burlesque of the league of nations. The programmes of those remote days are fully as interesting as the walls of Browne's or Keen's. O. W. Holmes, jr., played Sergeant Damme in "The Lady of the Lions." He is better known to-day as Mr. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, of the United States Supreme Court. Mr. F. G. Peabody played Cassio in "Othello the Moore," which was not written by Shakespeare. This gentleman in the course of time became Plummer Professor of Christian Morals at Harvard, and created a sizable tempest of laughter a generation later when, in a moment of fear lest his sons might see a bit of doggerel which he had written into one of the club's archives, he removed the volume from its safekeeping and then removed the offending page from the volume. It got into the papers, and Professor Francis Greenough Peabody was the chief topic of Boston's tea-time conversation for days.

The Hon. Hamilton Fish appears in an 1872 programme as property man, and on the same bill the name of "Miss Roberta Grant," otherwise Judge Robert Grant, of Boston. Francis R. Appleton, now the president of the Harvard Club of New York, bore the responsibilities of stage manager of a '75 performance. Barrett Wendell, whose name figures as jovially in Harvard anecdote as it does in the teaching of English, played in 1876 the rôle of Ponticopp in "A Beach of Promise." In the extravaganza "Lord Bateman," which was given by the class of '80, Robert Bacon, former Ambassador to France, played the name part. The next year William Roscoe Thayer was stage manager of a cast which included Curtis Guild, jr., the late Governor of Massachusetts and Ambassador to Russia.

Then came a red-letter year, 1882 when Owen Wister wrote and set to music a revised version of "The Æneid," called "Dido and Æneas," in which E. H. Pendleton, of Cincinnati, played Dido and the late Evert Jansen Wendell the Pious Æneas; in which, too, an umbrella served as the cave in which the two were caught in the rain. It was so successful that the Hasty Pudding promptly decided to produce nothing but original musical comedies and set up a policy which has been followed ever since.

Glancing down the roster of the following years will afford an occasional chuckle, as, for example, one's eye picks out Thomas Mott Osborne, of Auburn, Sing Sing and Portsmouth, playing Helen of Troy; or the philosopher, George Santayana, as Lady Elfrida in "Robin Hood"; or J. P. Morgan as business manager. During the early '90s the unusual talent of Jacob Wendell, jr., or "Jack" Wendell, as he was known and admired, was the guiding spirit of the club's efforts, a talent which made a definite and enviable place for him on the professional stage until he died. Occasionally the club cked out the evening with music. Nicholas Longworth gave a violin solo one night in 1890. Regis Post, later Governor of Porto Rico, wrote a '91 play and acted its leading rôle, and on the same bill, in an operetta by Benjamin Apthorp Gould, jr., Thomas W. Lamont, now a partner in J. P. Morgan & Co., was a chorus girl. Alexander M. White, a recent special Deputy Police Commissioner of New York, in charge of the Home Defence League, wrote the '92 Pudding play, called "The Old Bedstead," and acted in it so that it might be played correctly.

Still the Talent Continues

No less an impresario than Winthrop Ames wrote the play of 1895, "Proserpina," and drew the poster for it. Daniel Gregory Mason wrote the music and Arthur Stanwood Pier was the business manager—no job for an author. The next year the leading lady and the artist who painted the poster for the play were one and the same, and the same was Edward G. Knoblock, author of "Kismet," "Tiger! Tiger!" and numerous other successes. Guy Scull, Deputy Police Commissioner under Arthur Woods, played Professor G. A. Tartlett, a Bird, in the skit of 1897. Henry Woodruff, who later became a professional matinee idol of considerable musical comedy fame, led the cast of the next piece.

In the last ten or fifteen years there seems to have been no perceptible slackening of the potential talent of the authors and actors of "Pudding shows." The 1903 piece was written by Richard Washburn Child and the music for it composed by Dr. F. Morris Class, now a song composer of some prominence. Vinton Freedley, the "heroine" of the 1913 and 1914 plays and composer of the music for the latter production, is now on the professional stage in "Come-On Charley," and has appeared in several other New York plays, and Edward Strecter, who wrote the book and lyrics of the 1914 play, is known from San Francisco to the Rhine as the author of the immortal "Dere Mable."

Breadline and the Baths

By Bertram Reinitz

THE ONLY breadline in the history of hunger and need whose members bathe daily will discuss industrial reconstruction at the first annual convention of any breadline on May 1 at 44 Bowery. Five thousand past and present members have pledged their attendance. This will necessitate three instalments to the convention, covering the entire day.

Michael Cummings, an unemployed laborer; two superintendents of huge plants; Daniel Lennon, who left the breadline for a job mending roads in Greenwood Cemetery, and two or three Congressmen will give the lineal diners their assorted viewpoints on the transition of industry from the temporary business of war to the permanent business of peace. Soup and bread will be served.

From a literary standpoint, the gatherings will be worthless and colorless.

The facial hirsute growth will average only a few inches to the session instead of per capita. The rooms may be crowded and the day warm and the windows closed, and yet there will be air as well as atmosphere. For in the grooming of the host of hungry unemployed for the convention Urbain J. Ledoux, founder and perpetuator of the Breadline Employment Clearing House, has insisted that a daily bath must go with the daily bread.

Ordeal of Water

This ordeal of water has drowned out the Mikes and Petes. They tasted the steaming, fragrant coffee, the thick, filling soup and the newly baked bread, and with these tastes heavy upon them went to bathe in the free baths in Eleventh Street, between Avenues A and B. They suffered.

On Monday Mr. Ledoux announced that the last of the Bowery regulars had closed his nostrils to the aromatic eloquence of the food. The breadline, he said, was composed of 85 per cent former war workers, military and civil, and 15 per cent other workers, most of them displaced by returning soldiers. Of the discharged soldiers in the line 70 per cent were men from out of town who had first viewed the city through the screen of dollars, their last month's army transportation pay, and had seen Broadway, which had changed to the Bowery when the screen was spent away.

The baths are taken each evening, just after supper time. An anonymous subscriber provides the five cents for the towels and soap for each man. Mr. Ledoux leads the breadliners from 203 East Ninth Street to the baths in squads of fifty. With the clothes each man receives a slip of paper entitling him to a night's lodging and three meals on the following day. The quarters at 203 East Ninth Street include a fairly spacious store, partitioned into a dining room and kitchen. The men sleep on and under the benches, on the ancient piano, the tables, the floor and every other surface available for sleeping purposes. On the recent few balmy evenings the benches of Cooper Square Park relieved the congestion within the mission. The chapel of St. Marks-in-the-Bouwerie is thrown open as sleeping quarters for some of the men.

A breakfast of porridge and coffee is served, after which the men, gathered in groups, scan the advertising columns of the morning papers. Scouts are dispatched to establishments requesting a large number of men. One scout obtained positions for 150 men last week on repair work in a cemetery.

A Boarding House, Too

As a majority of the business houses have ironclad rules preventing their making advances on salaries, those who are placed generally spend one week as "breadline boarders." They are given their carfare and lunch money by Mr. Ledoux and his volunteer assistants. They sign I O U's—and without exception, pay the full amount out of the first money they receive. And occasionally, a few days later, a dollar drifts in through the mail, with a brief note that it be spent to "help some other fellow the way you helped me."

At noon the breadliners who have been unsuccessful in their search for employment file dejectedly back to the mission for soup and bread. Then follows an afternoon of wearying pursuit of the elusive job, with a return to the mission for supper, bath and bed.

It is these men who will hold the convention. At a preliminary caucus held on Sunday last at 44 Bowery the leaders decided that they would ignore Bolshevism. They would neither indorse nor condemn it. Michael Cummings announced that he would suggest two five-hour shifts in each ten-hour day for unskilled laborers, enabling all to eat and live. They decided to invite scores of city officials and prominent business men, in order to demonstrate that the breadliners are victims of the period and not of their own industrial disinterest.

The convention will begin at 10 o'clock in the morning on May 1 at 44 Bowery. Your rich man, poor man, beggar man and plain medium man—are invited.